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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/EU: DUTCH VIEWS ON APRIL GAERC

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Dutch FM Verhagen's letter to parliament, reported at ref A, reviewed the GAERC agenda for April 27-28. In a briefing for allied diplomats on April 22, EU Deputy Correspondent Rochus Pronk and senior policy officer Peter Jan Kleiweg made the following points:

-- Southern Corridor: The Netherlands believes this Czech initiative is important given the Netherlands' dependence on foreign fuel and participation in the Nordstream project.

-- European Partnership: The May 7 summit of the EU and partner countries is important, particularly on regional issues such as crime. However, the Netherlands does not want the EU to give any signal suggesting prospective EU membership. On Belarus, the EU will discourage participation by President Lukashenko. PM Balkendende will indicate that closer relations with Belarus depend on that country's support for human rights.

-- Moldova: The Netherlands want to hold Moldova accountable for the ongoing human rights. In addition, Moldova is tied to EU internal affairs, as Romania is considering giving passports to one million Moldovans. The Netherlands has limits on workers from Romania coming to the Netherlands through 2012, and Romania's decision on the passports could have an effect on that policy.

-- MEPP: Pronk was pessimistic on making progress given the uncertainty about Israel's new government and the PA's reconciliation process, but the Dutch want to match the EU and U.S. positions, with "no space" between them. The parties should continue to follow the Quartet principles. The Netherlands wants to continue to intensify relations with Israel.

-- Iran: The Netherlands fully supports the two-track approach and the U.S. decision to participate in the discussions.

-- Georgia: The Netherlands continues to follow the protests. The ministers will certainly discuss Russia's role.

-- Afghanistan: As a follow-up to the EU-U.S. summit, the EU will discuss "how we can contribute" to the international effort in Afghanistan.

GALLAGHER